

# HISTORICAL SKETCH

## PROVINCE OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

OF THE

### GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION.

THE individuals more or less connected with history have long been divided into two classes: "those who make history" and "those who write history." In one sense the former class comprises the whole human race, for every human being contributes something to that great stream of events, the course of which is mapped, and the flow of which is recorded by the pen of the historian; but the expression is commonly applied to the actors in the more important or more interesting scenes in the drama of life. Among these scenes a deep interest has always attached to the conquest of the wilderness by civilization, to the foundation of new nations, states, cities and communities, and to the first critical years of their development. Accordingly an attempt is made in the following pages to give, in the shape of a consecutive narrative, the chief events and incidents that have characterized the settlement and development of Prince Edward Island, from the earliest times down to the present day.

In the olden times it had generally been the case, that those who "made history" had long been in their graves, sometimes for centuries, ere those who "wrote history" began to record their great deeds. Those earlier writers of history could only rely upon doubtful traditions, or at best upon a few worn and scattered manuscripts, for the material from which they were to construct their enduring records. Endless mistakes were naturally the consequence, numerous conflicts were waged over disputed points, and many of them are unsettled even to the present day.

But in our more rapid age the writer of history often stands pen in hand, beside the pioneer, the workman, and the soldier, ready to record their deeds, ere yet the hunter's antlered victim ceases to quiver beneath his fatal shot, ere yet the echoes of the woodman's axe die away in the distance, ere yet the toeman's blood is wiped from the warrior's steel.

In harmony with this spirit of the age, the publishers of this and other similar works have sought to obtain as great a part of their history as their opportunities would permit them from living lips. Sons and daughters of those who led the vanguard of the army of civilization in its attack on the forest still live. From some of these we have been able to obtain facts regarding the development of different parts of the Province.

Besides the evidence thus procured from original sources, we give a succinct account of the early discoveries which gave the French what they considered a title to the Island. The history of this Island in point of interest is second to that of none of the British North American Colonies, while, as a record of the development of British Colonial Government, it surpasses them all in political value. The briefest outline of it cannot fail to show that the people whose actions and progress it records, have ever been distinguished by a profound respect for law and order, as well as by an unwavering determination to achieve for themselves and their posterity the fullest measure of civil liberty and political justice. The historical part of this work will, it is hoped, invest the accompanying maps and engravings with some degree of living interest to the reader, by recalling in connection with them associations of the past.

That in so voluminous a work, entering into so many details, we have entirely escaped error, no one can reasonably expect, but we have taken great pains to avoid mistakes, and we believe there are as few within the following pages, as in any volume of the kind published.

Among the many who kindly furnished Mr. C. R. Allen, Engineer in charge of surveys, with valuable information, including plans and surveys, we would respectfully mention, Hon. Joseph Pope, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Owen Curtis, Esq., Surveyor-General, and their gentlemanly assistants, Nicholas Coutroy, Esq., Registrar of Deeds, and Norman J. Campbell, Esq., Deputy. Messrs. Manning and McNeill, of the office of Supt. of Education. Also, Messrs. John Ball, Joseph Ball, H. J. Cundall, P. D. Cox, John C. Underhay, John Clay, Alex. Anderson and Roderick Campbell, Surveyors, besides many other private individuals.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND is situated in the Southern portion of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It is separated from the Main Land by the Strait of Northumberland. Its nearest point to the Continent is Cape Traverse, which is only nine miles distant from Cape Tormentine in the Province of New Brunswick. It lies between the parallels of 46 and 47 of North latitude, and between 62 deg. and 64 deg. 30 minutes West longitude. In shape it is long and narrow—its length along the shore being about 150 miles, and its greatest breadth—the boundary line between King and Queen's Counties—is 34 miles; but its average breadth does not exceed 18 miles. Its coast on all sides is very much indented by inlets from the sea, many of which form very good harbours—thus affording good shipping facilities to almost every section of the Island.

### DISCOVERY AND EARLY SETTLEMENT.

The date of the Island's discovery is a disputed point among all its previous historians, nor has the writer of this short sketch anything worth recording—to contribute towards its settlement. But although all interest—beyond what is purely historical—in this dispute has now happily, wholly passed away, it was probable, at one time, the most hotly contested dispute that has ever arisen in connection with this Island; for it appears to have grown out of the rivalries of England and France in their efforts to obtain, each to the exclusion of the other, the sole and permanent possession of this and the surrounding regions of North America. On the 24th of June, 1497, John Cabot, one of the most skilful and daring navigators of that time, then in the service of Henry the Seventh of England, for the express purpose of making further explorations of the New World discovered to Europe by Columbus seven years before, is said to have landed on the Island, and to have bestowed upon it the name of St. John, in honor of the day on which he had made his discovery. But if Cabot actually landed on the Island on that day—an event, in itself, by no means improbable, the English Government of the day failed to lay claims to it. In 1523 the coast of North America was visited by Verazani, a navigator employed by France to make discoveries in the New World. Verazani, in obedience to the instructions received from his master, claimed the regions he visited for the King of France. Many years afterwards, when France began her settlement in North America, she claimed this Island as one of the regions discovered on her behalf by Verazani in 1523. No formal attempt appears to have been made to settle the Island until 1663. In that year Captain Doublet, a French naval officer obtained a grant of the Island from the company of New France, for the purpose of establishing fisheries around its coast. Captain Doublet held possession of the Island until 1700; but during this period nothing appears to have been done in the way of establishing permanent settlements in the country. Notwithstanding the many advantages which the Island offered for the pursuit of agriculture—advantages so obvious, that they could scarcely have altogether escaped the observation of the most careless of the fishermen that had been, for so many years, in the habit of visiting its shores—it was not until the year 1713, upwards of two hundred years after its discovery, that this Island can be said to have begun to attract settlers to cultivate its fertile soil. An event took place in this year which gave the first stimulus to the permanent settlement of the Island. This event was the

### TREATY OF UTRÉCHT.

which was signed in the year 1713, and by which a war of ten years duration, between England and France, was brought to a close. At this time, France held this Island, Cape Breton, and Canada, in undisputed possession, while the possession of Nova Scotia, then called Acadia, was disputed with her by England—many of the French forts in that province having been seized by the New Englanders, who, at that time, cheer-

fully owned their allegiance to the British Crown, and were among the bravest and most devoted of its subjects. One of the stipulations of the treaty was the cession of Acadia and Newfoundland to England. But this Island, Cape Breton, and Canada were still retained by France. As soon as the French population of Acadia learned that the province had been given up to England by their king, many of them began to move to this Island, choosing to encounter the privations and hardships incident to the settlement of a new country which they could still call their own, rather than live on their old farms in Acadia under a foreign, and at that time, much dreaded, if not hated flag.

Thus the early French settlements began. Port Joy—the name which the French gave to what is now Charlottetown harbor—Pinnette, and Capraud appear to have been the earliest of the French settlements on the Island. But a few years after the commencement of these settlements, the settlements of St. Peter's, Rustico, Malpeque, and a few others on the North Shore, began. Some of these settlements were a considerable distance apart from each other; and communication between them was attended with much difficulty, and, by no means, free from danger. The country being as yet, of course, destitute of roads and bridges, the journey had to be made by the sea shore or through a dense forest, with only an occasional Indian foot-path or the course of one of the Island streams to guide the traveller in his way.

It was not to be expected, under the circumstances, that the settlement of the Island could go on very rapidly. And it is stated, accordingly, on seemingly good authority, that in 1728, fifteen years after the settlement began, the population of the Island did not exceed 300, and that in 1745 it did not reach 1000. But in this year again war between France and England promoted the Island's settlement. The New Englanders, still as brave and as devoted to the interests of the British Crown as ever, resolved, upon the breaking out of this new war between England and France, to aid the mother land in the struggle, by despatching a fleet and army to capture Louisburg, then the capital of Cape Breton, and, next to Quebec, the strongest and most important military station which France had in America. The New England fleet and army came and Louisburg fell before them in June, 1745, after a siege of about six weeks. This put Cape Breton for the time in the hands of the English, and several French families moved to the Island in consequence. It was at this time that the settlement now called Kollo Bay began, although its first settlers came, not from Cape Breton, but from Acadia, which had now been in the possession of England for upwards of 30 years. Souris too received its first settlers at this time. Still, notwithstanding these accessions, the population of the Island, according to the estimates of a French officer who visited all its settlements in 1752, did not then reach 1500.

The final struggle between France and England for the possession of these regions was now drawing near. It was with great reluctance, and, as it afterwards appeared, with a secret determination to embrace the very first favorable opportunity of retaking them, that France yielded Newfoundland and Acadia to England in 1713. With this object in view she spent large sums of money in erecting the strong fortress of Louisburg in Cape Breton. From Cape Breton and this Island she secretly supplied her emissaries with the means of harassing the English settlers in Acadia, in order to prevent them from obtaining a permanent footing in the country. This led to frequent conflicts between the English settlers and their French Acadian neighbors—the latter being often aided by the Indians in their assaults upon the former. These assaults, at last, became so frequent and troublesome that the English deemed it indispensable to their safety to expel the French from the province. Stringent measures for this purpose were adopted in 1755, when a large portion of the French population was dispersed through the other British Colonies by order of the Nova Scotia Government. In the alarm created by this violent measure many of the French Acadians fled for shelter to this